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Contact

November 15, 1948

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[Redacted]
Central Intelligence Agency
2430 E Street NW
Washington, D. C.

Dear [Redacted]

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Following our conversation of November 12, I would like to underline the following points.

1. Centralization. Centralization is the only means under which it will be possible to justify the credits necessary for the constitution of a complete translators pool. Opponents of centralization reproach it with making difficult the liaison between the translators and the researchers for whom they work. It seems to me that this argument is entirely fallacious because:

a. A central translating unit should be subdivided in branches or sections corresponding to the utilizing offices and remaining in constant liaison with them.

b. Under the present practices the backlog of translations, as well as the miscellaneous character of the documents entrusted to the translators, renders entirely impossible any consultation with the researchers even if these latter are in the same administrative unit (for instance, Department of the Army).

2. Personnel. You will remember that my estimate differed from yours by 900%. I repeat that my estimate was concerned with the services alone and was based on the needs, known to me, of MID, of one part of the Air Intelligence and also on the number of pertinent publications appearing in the major countries. Of course, since I have not made an accurate survey, my estimate is approximate in character. This, however, can in no way explain the divergence between our views. The latter is due, I believe, to the difference of conception between exploitation of documents by researcher linguists capable and authorized to make the necessary decisions and the system, presently, in use, of a multiple step exploitation in which the decisions are made by people generally not familiar with foreign languages and in which the translating is reduced to a semi mechanical function. *Already done by FDB 4P*

I therefore repeat my estimate: 40 to 60 specialized personnel will take care of the needs of the services--with the possible exception of certain specialized technical translations, such as those handled at WrightField.

3. This brings me to another point of our discussion: What documents should be included under the heading of intelligence documents. I believe that it would be premature to try to answer this question at the present moment. If a central translating unit

is established, it will be possible to compare its efficiency with that of the units handling other types of translation, after that the necessary steps may be taken.

I avail myself of the occasion of the present letter to thank you for our pleasant conversation and I again offer my services to help in solving this problem which falls within my field of specialization.

Very truly yours.

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